



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental
Affairs
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900
Boston, MA 02114-2119

Deval L. Patrick
GOVERNOR

Timothy P. Murray
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

Ian A. Bowles
SECRETARY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tel: (617) 626-1000
Fax: (617) 626-1181
<http://www.mass.gov/envir>

Contact: Robert Keough
(617) 626-1109
Lisa Capone
(617) 626-1119

September 27, 2007

Secretary Bowles Commends Campuses for Greenhouse Gas Emission Pledge
Bay State Leads the Way with all 29 Public Colleges and Universities Signed Onto
American College & University Presidents Climate Commitment

BOSTON – Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Ian Bowles today congratulated 41 Massachusetts campuses – including all 29 public colleges and universities – for joining a national campaign to make college campuses “climate neutral” by embracing clean energy technologies and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Of the more than 400 campuses in 47 states that have signed onto the American College & University Presidents Climate Commitment since it was launched earlier this year, 10 percent are Massachusetts institutions of higher education. The only other state that approaches Massachusetts’s allegiance to the campaign is California – also with 41 campuses signed on, but with a population six times larger than Massachusetts.

“Massachusetts campuses have clearly stepped up to the plate in a big way,” Secretary Bowles said. “Our 29 public colleges and universities are responsible for about 42 percent of total state government greenhouse gas emissions, and several schools have significant expansion plans on the table. That makes their pledge to pursue clean energy and reduce greenhouse gas emissions especially significant.”

The American College & University Presidents Climate Commitment is a joint project of the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE), ecoAmerica, and Second Nature, a Massachusetts non-profit organization headed by Anthony Cortese. The campaign provides a framework to help colleges and universities develop plans for reducing greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to global warming – with a goal of making their campuses “climate neutral.”

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Some 200 students, staff and faculty from public campuses that have signed the Commitment convened at the University of Massachusetts–Dartmouth last week for a conference featuring workshops on climate change, sponsored by Connect, the Southeastern Massachusetts Higher Education Partnership. Eric Friedman, director of Leading by Example Programs in the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA), addressed the group on behalf of Secretary Bowles. He noted that the campuses are part of a growing movement to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions to slow the pace of climate change.

“In Massachusetts, we are well on our way –through Governor Patrick’s commitment to a clean energy economy, his commitment to making efficiency and renewables the most cost effective options, and his commitment to leading by example at state facilities through expanded efficiency, increased use of renewable power, high green building standards, and clean fleet policies,” Friedman said.

By signing the American College & University Presidents Climate Commitment, presidents and chancellors pledge to eliminate greenhouse gas emissions from their campuses within a “reasonable period of time.” Requirements of the pledge include establishing a task force or committee within two months of signing to guide the process; completing an inventory of greenhouse gas emissions within one year; creating and implementing a climate neutral plan, including target dates and milestones, within two years; integrating sustainability into the school curriculum; and making the campus action plan, inventory and periodic progress reports available to the public.

Clean energy programs already under way on Massachusetts public campuses include:

- At Massachusetts Maritime Academy, a 660 kilowatt wind turbine that provides, on average, over 28 percent of campus electricity needs - plus a solar photovoltaic system on one Academy dorm, campus-wide energy efficiency measures, and a program to explore use of biodiesel for campus vehicles;
- At Mt. Wachusett Community College, a wood chip–fired biomass plant that supplies all heat for the entire campus, plans to install a 100-kilowatt solar array, and a feasibility study for a large wind turbine (the campus has already reduced its greenhouse gas emissions by approximately 20 percent over the past five years);
- At UMass-Amherst, work on installing a state-of-the-art co-generation natural gas power plant that will eliminate a university-owned coal plant which, alone, is responsible for 5 percent of state government greenhouse gas emissions;
- At MassArt and Holyoke Community College, installation of green roofs;
- At Cape Cod Community College, opening of state government’s first Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certified building, which includes a 27-kilowatt solar array, and soliciting bids for the second state-owned wind turbine.
- At five state colleges - including Salem State, Mt. Wachusett Community, Worcester State, Springfield Technical Community, and North Shore Community, plans to install over 400 kilowatts of solar photovoltaics within the next several months.

For more information about EOEEA’s Leading by Example Program, visit <http://www.mass.gov/envir/Sustainable>. To learn more about the campus Climate Commitment, go to www.presidentsclimatecommitment.org.

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